



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## OPERATION WEED AND SEED

### **ST. JOSEPH NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGNATED OFFICIAL WEED AND SEED SITE**

**ST. JOSEPH, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that the Mid-City Neighborhood of St. Joseph, Mo., has been designated an official Weed and Seed Site by the United States Department of Justice's Executive Office for Weed and Seed.

Operation Weed and Seed is a program that aims to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods across the country. Weed and Seed sites range in size from several neighborhood blocks to 15 square miles. St. Joseph's site is located between 12<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> streets, from Mitchell to Frederick avenues.

“Starting today, St. Joseph will begin to reap the benefits of the Weed and Seed program itself,” Graves said. “The community now will be eligible for additional federal money, up to \$175,000 in the first year alone and more than \$1 million over the course of five years.”

“The federal money will provide law enforcement agencies opportunities to hire additional staff,” Graves said. “It also will enable the city to increase its community policing, assist with prevention, intervention and treatment, and continue the process of restoring this neighborhood.”

Operation Weed and Seed is a multi-agency strategy that "weeds out" violent crime, gang activity, drug use and drug trafficking in targeted high-crime neighborhoods and "seeds" the target area by restoring these neighborhoods through social and economic revitalization. The Weed and Seed strategy recognizes the importance of linking and integrating federal, state and local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with federal, state and local social services, the private sector and community efforts to maximize the impact of existing programs and resources.

It also recognizes that community involvement is of paramount importance. Community residents must be empowered to assist in solving problems in their neighborhoods. In addition, the private sector is a pivotal partner in the Weed and Seed strategy.

Operation Weed and Seed is a U.S. Department of Justice initiative which began in 1991 when three pilot sites across the nation were selected to implement the strategy, including Kansas City as one of the original sites. Currently, there are nearly 400 sites officially recognized.

The citizens of the Mid-City Neighborhood have been working with federal, state and local officials to obtain the communities' own Weed and Seed recognition since 2001.

The Weed and Seed strategy involves a two-pronged approach. First, law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in "weeding out" criminals who participate in violent crime drug abuse, attempting to prevent their return to the targeted area as part of the program.

Second, "seeding" brings a variety of human services to the area encompassing crime prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood revitalization. A community-oriented policing component bridges the weeding and seeding aspects of the program. Officers obtain helpful information from area residents for weeding efforts while they aid residents in obtaining information about community revitalization and seeding resources.

The Western District of Missouri has three officially recognized sites, the new St. Joseph site, the previously mentioned Kansas City site and a site in the Fairmont district of Independence, Mo.

At each site, the United States Attorney plays a central role in organizing the Steering Committee and bringing together the communities with the other Weed and Seed participants. The United States Attorney also facilitates coordination of federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts. Through cooperation, sites can effectively use federal law in weeding strategies and mobilize resources for seeding programs from a variety of federal agencies.



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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)